



**OGLALA SIOUX TRIBE
DEPARTMENT OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT**

July 1, 2021

Secretary Peter Paul Montgomery Buttigieg
Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave S.E.
Washington, DC 20590

Subject: Oglala Sioux Tribe RAISE Planning Grant 2021

Secretary Buttigieg,

The Oglala Sioux Tribe (OST) Emergency Management office would like to urge your support of the 2021 RAISE Planning Grant application for the 20 miles of road between Kyle, South Dakota and South Dakota Highway 44.

The current road condition is so poor that our first responders and teams avoid this area of BIA Route 2 almost entirely. This causes significant delays responding to the northeastern region of the Reservation and the community of Wanblee, SD. Our teams from Pine Ridge detour through Martin via US Highway 18 instead of traveling through Kyle on BIA Route 2 which is a shorter distance. The condition of this road creates a barrier for emergency response. Creating an inability to travel directly between Kyle and Wanblee while forcing an unnecessary north or south detour dividing the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation.

There's no mistaking the problem. There's no ability for an ambulance to transit the road at a speed necessary for emergency response or to transit a patient on portions of road which are difficult to transit smoothly. Traveling this road puts our first responders and patients at risk.

This past year's COVID-19 pandemic proved that infrastructure is critical to emergency response. Many communities had to shelter in-place which meant emergency responders delivered food and supplies, causing damage to many of our vehicles. I have gone through 6 trucks this year.

The grant request would fund the completion of planning and preconstruction activities for 20.7 miles of arterial transportation corridor while addressing the more than 10 points where trucks enter BIA Route 2 from farms, ranches, or work sites, creating safety problems for emergency response vehicles traveling at increased speeds while rounding curves or ascending hills.

Please help us restore this important route for our first responders and approve this grant request.

Thank You,

Steve Wilson Sr.

Director

Oglala Sioux Tribe Emergency Management

OST EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT
PO BOX 2070 PINE RIDGE SD, 57770
101 MAIN STREET
PHONE 605-867-5000
FAX 605-8675003
OSTDEM75@GMAIL.COM